



Chesterfield County Age Wave Coalition

How Engaged is Your Community?

1. Can you think of new ways to engage older adults in volunteer opportunities?

- Neighborhood Watch, morphing into the neighborhood communities, where neighbors know families and have periodic contact.
- Schools: (3 people) One quoted: "Seniors could mentor youth, or youth could visit seniors that are isolated." And another quoted "Volunteering at schools, helping teachers one on one." Another quoted: "Every school desperately needs volunteers for various tasks weekly. Note: Lower income schools truly suffer as they often have fewer volunteers."
- How do we market volunteer opportunities? Can we share flyers at places like the YMCA? Or coordinate with churches, making presentations to clergy asking for volunteer help.
- Church communities should support the Back Pack program and include older adults as well as children.
- Have seniors offer babysitting for parents so they have time to do shopping, chores, etc. (2)
- Must have a cultural shift so that all ages recognize and begin to prepare for our aging population.
- Transportation (2 people) is a huge barrier. We need to find a solution.
- Hands on Greater Richmond.
- Volunteer Match. (2 people)
- Current daily updates of volunteer opportunities and organizations that need volunteers, to include contact person and skills needed for a job.
- We need a central number and website that lists organization that offer opportunities.
- We need a support group.
- Chesterfield Choral Society meets every Tuesday at New Covenant Presbyterian Church.
- McGuire Hospital needs volunteers.
- Provide transportation for those unable to drive.
- "Give them Ensure; chase them with a bat," (Note: this is a real response)
- Seniors need to come out of their houses. It's a struggle to get them out. Some communities have volunteers to take you places like the doctor's office. Are there places in Chesterfield County that do that? (Shepherd's Center was mentioned)
- We need more volunteer transportation in the county.
- It is easy to volunteer at the Lifelong Learning Institute. Accessibility is an issue for many who wish to volunteer at different venues. It's important to have opportunities in your locality.
- Interaction-build a Senior Center, day care or adult living facility next to an elementary school and you will have instant "grandparents" to interact with the children, benefiting both. Encourage those sites to read to the kids or tell them stories. Schedule "visits" or field trips.
- Advertise the volunteer needs clearly, both online and also with seniors who are not internet-savvy.

2. What Ideas do you have about how older and younger generations can join together?

- Catch Healthy Habits has a great program and maybe some similar activities can be done.
- Babysitting while mothers work.
- Interaction.
- Seniors can mentor younger generations and share ways to be patient and stay calm in a difficult situation.
- Camps often are for children, could we include older adults?
- Better walking paths so seniors could walk within their neighborhoods.
- Hold functions focused on youth, but with seniors as facilitators.
- Engage Boy & Girl Scouts in volunteer activities with seniors.
- Schools: Seniors assisting with sporting events, PTAs and other volunteer needs.
- Intergenerational child care, mix seniors with children at day care centers.
- Build more community centers where the young and old can be together.



- Churches could provide larger spaces for seniors to assist students with homework or do tutoring.
- There is animosity between young adults and seniors. Our youth believe elder citizens are a drain on society. We need a media presence to change the perception about seniors.
- Independent and assistive living facilities.
- Community Schools: High school students being encouraged to volunteer with seniors. Seniors doing "catch healthy habits, teaching younger people life skills."
- Community Schools could match stay at home moms with seniors that need friendship. (2 people) (MOPS, etc.)
- Arts and crafts, computers.
- Friends, family.
- Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI). (3 people) LLI is bursting at the seams; if they had additional classrooms, they could provide tutoring sessions.
- At LLI, VCU students come to help seniors with various programs. It is great!

3. What roles do older adults play in your family, your community and your workplace?

- Seniors have knowledge, wisdom and patience that should be shared/taught with our youth.
- Seniors attend government meetings. However, many cease participating in community affairs if they feel nothing is being accomplished.
- Complaint that people have attempted to volunteer only to leave a message and never receive back a response, thus they get discouraged.
- Foster Grandparents program.
- Checkers and skating.
- We get out and vote.
- Before and after-school care of school age children, homework help for family members and others at schools and libraries.
- "SAFE House" for kids to go after school, if kids are worried.
- I do not have many older adults in my family or workplace.
- My retired neighbors are like grandparents. They check on and look out for me, and I check on and look out for them. (and offer IT support)
- I am an older adult! But there are some older adults in my neighborhood. They are good neighbors and give a sense of stability. They make us all aware of our sense of humanity to others.

4. Use this space to help you think about the supports and networks in your life?

- Churches, faith based organizations. (2 people)
- Civic groups. At this meeting, 50% were involved in such.
- Grandparents raising grandchildren, getting support from others in similar situations. (2 people)
- Veterans supporting each other.
- Groups like AA helping after the fact of a problem.
- We need better prevention training and early detection for addiction, plus training for good health skills and fun activities.
- Networks outside of work, such as specific support groups or associations.
- Seniors could offer speaking opportunities in the classroom to share experiences in their lives, especially those with specific cultural ties that are different.
- Senior Ambassador Program is excellent for this.
- Adopt a "grandchild" to help with chores, computer skills, etc.
- She volunteers at public library and schools. (2 people)
- Family.
- Gym.



How Livable is Your Community?

1. What features would make your neighborhood/county more accessible for you, your family, and your neighbors?

- People with disabilities need assistance, but if they are married, their incomes may preclude their getting the needed assistance.
- People, who are full time caregivers for a loved one, often need fresh air and opportunity for exercise. If Parks & Recreation offered a care service for a few hours, then the caregiver could leave his charge for a short while and get a break as well as exercise. Note: Speaker reminded us that for Parks & Recreation, the need always exceeds their resources.
- Bus system. (3 people)
- Blended community that offers all needs within walking distance.
- Transportation (6 people) "Reinstate the transport bus and drop the cost for those on disability." (1 person) "The ability to drive is the biggest factor in being able to participate in activities in our county." (1 person)"
- What would you do if you couldn't drive? Move – preferably to a retirement community, if you could afford it. This is a frequent topic (being able to drive) of conversation among us. Carpooling can work but there can be problems such as liability, insurance and limited destinations. I can get a ride to church but not to the doctor's office. (1 person) If we lose the ability to drive ourselves, we lose supports and networks in the community. (1 person)
- Club houses. (2 people) Meeting places such as school systems and churches.
- Malls integrated with living areas; add apartments to shopping areas.
- Refit existing neighborhoods with local gas stations and small food stores just to serve the community and allow everyone to walk to shop.
- Zoning laws need to be revamped to allow integration of shops with housing. (2 people) Zoning changes to allow "mother – in- law" suites to be added or modifications to homes allowed for multi-generational households. (1 person)
- Builders need to be encouraged to think of senior needs and change plans prior to construction. Universal housing is key.
- Lists of different community groups. (Note: We provided a Resource Directory.)
- Library.
- A big Wal-Mart.
- Sidewalks. (6 people)
- Trails.
- Taxi service, low cost or subsidizing to do shopping and doctor appointments.
- Street lighting in older neighborhoods. (2 people)
- More county police surveillance. (2 people)
- Skill-swapping and services where seniors would offer to care for child (2 people) and pets for a few hours.
- Assisted living facilities need to be more reasonably priced. Chesterfield County seems to be for the rich, but I am poor, I will soon need assistance.
- Not all communities have safe places to meet.
- Chesterfield needs something like Dogwood Dell where young and old can gather and is free. Can't the Ironworks Park be used?
- More local services to be near us instead of the trend to move West-- too many grocery stores, hardware stores, dentists, doctors, etc. have moved away from the older population.

2. Are there public spaces in our community where caregivers or older adults may gather safely to share information and resources?

- Colleges could offer space, and encourage students to do community outreach.
- Seniors could teach or tutor at junior colleges in the area.
- Seniors could assist with watching out for school age children at bus stops.
- Libraries. (5 people) Meadowdale Library. (1 person)



- Transportation (2 people) is a deterrent for many to have these opportunities. Transportation is often required for those who can't drive; people need to ask church leaders and members for assistance.
- Friendship Cafes.
- Churches. (6 people) "But the hassle in many cases makes them too hard to use." (1 person)
- Need a centralized place to match space with requirements and cost to use them.
- Swim RVA.
- Festivals.
- Community Centers. (2 people)
- Schools. (4 people) after hours (1 person)
- Revive the hospital "candy striper" program.

3. Are there areas in your daily life that you could change in order to feel safer?

- Better communication to warn residents of dangers in their community.
- More neighborhood picnics with police as guests.
- Neighborhood Watch programs could be expanded to focus on communities, not just crime prevention.
- Police Department could offer free security inspections to your home.
- Use of Fire Department's offer to inspect your smoke detectors, etc. (2 people)
- Time activities so seniors are out and about during daylight hours.
- Avoid going to ATM's at night.
- Wear the alert bracelets if you have a health issue.
- Increase awareness of Police program that can check on elders or use of the tracking devices for those with dementia. (Project Lifesaver)
- Street lighting in neighborhoods. (9 people.) Provide more security. (1 person) People would pay for street lights and sidewalks. (taxes)
- "More guns, burglar alarms and pit bulls."
- Sidewalks. (8 people) There are too many people walking on the road. (1 person) Motorized wheel chairs are using the streets. (1 person) "Why can't Chesterfield have sidewalks?" (1 person) Walking communities have sidewalks or paths, know each other better and watch out for one another. We don't have neighborhoods, just large clusters of homes."
- Walking would be good for kids also.
- I need help getting a loved one into the car.
- People drive too fast-- high-schoolers.
- Churches could help for rides to doctors, etc., requires a lot of time and planning.
- More banisters for steps inside and outside of buildings.
- A permanent ambulance at the Midlothian Fire Station.
- We do feel safe, especially if we know neighbors and are able to rely on family.
- Security systems also provide a feeling of well-being. (3 people) It would be nice if a personal alarm system was more affordable for seniors. If my friends didn't call me, and I them, I would not be missed for days. None of us have family in this area. (1 person)
- Increase police presence. (4 people) One person suggested the police stop at homes simply to introduce themselves to the areas they cover.
- I am concerned for people who are vulnerable in the neighborhoods.
- Move to senior housing (independent) which would provide some social activities and transportation options.
- Motion sensor lighting. (2 people) Timers to turn lights on and off; make it brighter indoors (1 person)

5. Do you or your neighbors experience any barriers to mobility?

- Congested traffic patterns.
- Some stores and restaurants don't have good ADA access.



- Aging rental homes may deteriorate and cause loss of safety issues for longtime residents. Having to move may take more of their income than they can afford.
- Lack of free bus service.
- Sidewalks are lacking in many localities. (2 people) Wheel chairs and elderly with canes walk down my street with heavy traffic to local shopping center. (1 person)
- It would help if roadways had larger shoulder or bike paths to allow for safe walking.
- My neighbors have ramps to get in and out of front and back doors. Their church builds ramps and supplies the materials. "Labor unions will also offer plumbing, electrical, carpentry, etc. to seniors and disabled, but we need a centralized place to coordinate what's needed with the labor group that has the skills needed at no cost to the senior adult."
- Crosswalks. (2 people) Crosswalks with pedestrian crossing buttons. (1 person)
- Many of my neighbors do. Some no longer drive at night. Eyesight and joint problems are common.
- I drive myself, but am now dealing with cataracts.

How Stable is Your Community?

1. How could a workplace be more supportive of workers to maintain them in the workplace longer?

- Cease outsourcing jobs, and stop cutting benefits to workers.
- Cross training to allow workers to hone new skills. (2 people) Changing job requirements with seniors changing abilities and skills. They still have so much to give!
- Teleconference.
- Second skill could provide part-time work.
 - Use a four day work week schedule. Flexible hours (9 people) to allow for care of elders, or children. (2 people of the 8 people)
 - Be flexible on schedules; offer family leave to employees who need time to be a primary caregiver. Some need to be given an "attitude adjustment" in order to value the knowledge and experience of senior employees. (1 person)
 - Job sharing and allowing employees to retire and work two days a week. (1 person)
- Reduced hours of work as the employee moves to full retirement/or keep them working longer. (1 person) Shorter work week or work day. (1 person)
- Adhere to ADA regulations; so many don't really make workplaces accessible.
- Older workers often feel as though they are being pushed out and forced to retire.
- Suggested that a person near retirement age go into business for themselves.
- Provide more money.
- Offer continuing education opportunities to employees and encourage age diversity in the workplace.
- Tickets to Kings Dominion.
- Job sharing and flexible hours.
- More physical fitness opportunities like a gym or an exercise room.
- Allow employees to retire and work part-time hours.
- Encourage retired personnel to return as consultants, even as a volunteer,
- Go to meetings, webinars.
- Need crosswalks.

2. Do you need more information or knowledge about how to plan for your future?

- The mentality in government is that elders should be secure in their retirement, but many are not. Divorce, loss of a spouse, etc., can create shortages in funding for elders.
- Many seniors (those now over age 65) do feel like they prepared for retirement, but worry that the next generation have not and are not living within their means.
- People don't see the need to ask for this information until the need actually arises.
- There needs to be more public service information.
- Educate financial advisors, specifically banks of this need.



- Parents should talk to young adult children often about the need to plan for the future.
- Seniors hear different responses from different customer service reps; would be great if companies would do more training.
- Need information on how to start a business.
- Suggested that the Better Business Bureau offers such aid for retired business owners.
- Prior to retirement, it would be valuable to have volunteer opportunities available. (2 people)
"If a person volunteers while still working, they are more likely to volunteer as a retired person."
- Know where to go for help-- Chesterfield Council on Aging Resource guide and web sites.
- Not at this time.

3. How could a workplace make better use of the knowledge and experience of its older employees?

- Encourage youth to learn a trade, versus just a college degree, or mundane work.
- Many businesses do not meet ADA requirements.
- Use older workers as mentors to new employees. (4 people)
- Empower older employees to lead collaborative groups.
- Being more open to changing requirements and knowledge base.
- Suggest that officials enforce codes more frequently.
- Faith based communities: If the pastor or church leader began an open communication about the need to change our ideas on aging, it could be a step forward.
- Databases with all older workers' abilities and who those workers are.
- It's a matter of attitude. Teaching employers to value and treat older employees with respect. Older employees can be an asset in P.R. They know how to treat "customers" and can give good customer service. They have knowledge to pass down which once lost, is gone forever. They are dependable."

How Well is Your Community?

1. What areas of health and health care would you like to learn more about?

- Inoculations for seniors.
- Classes about wellness that offer interesting topics.
- Activities need to be more affordable.
- Tiny houses and how to find them in our area.
- We need a program on mental wellness, e.g. how to approach people.
- Retired.
- Preventative care.
- Exercise, disease prevention, medication side effects and management.
- Computers, doctors.
- None.
- As the health care system becomes more complicated, there will be a need for help to be available for seniors to make choices about all the insurance plans, not sales pitches. A local version of VICAP.

2. Do you know how to find the information you need?

- Rely on Chesterfield Observer for new information.
- Use of internet, i.e. Google. (2 people)
- The County Resource Directory and Lifelong Learning Institute.
- Only two attendees have a smart phone. Almost none of the participants use texting as a means to communicate, but many found the web VERY useful. There is a concern that many seniors do not have access to or the skills to use computers.
- A Yellow Dot program was discussed. Is it useable outside of our particular county?



- No.
- Newspaper.
- Chesterfield Observer.
- VA Family of Websites (VirginiaNavigator).
- I wish there was a central website for aging and resources in Chesterfield County.
- Yes. (2 people)

3. Are there personal wellness practices that you enjoy doing every day such as taking a nature walk, reflective reading or playing with your pets?

- Often people don't use the walking trails, etc. due to fear of crime.
- Exercise centers for seniors and walking trails.
- Sit and socialize with other seniors.
- "Yes, and currently I'm a member of GRAP, the Greater Richmond Aquatics Program, in Silver Sneakers. That program will go away Dec. 31, 2014, due to my doctors pulling away from Humana! We need cheaper ways to access their therapy pool without the \$8.00 /day cost. Way too expensive!"
- Walk with dogs.
- Exercise. (2 people)
- Meditation.
- Reading. (2 people)
- Gardening.
- Library programs.
- Yes.
- Classes at Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI). (3 people) Discussions of current events and novels at LLI.
- Exercise classes at LLI.

4. How do you find volunteer opportunities?

- Word of mouth. (3 people)
- Recruited by other volunteers.
- Newspaper. (2 people)
- Internet. (2 people)
- Search Google.
- Richmond.com.
- County publications.
- Lifelong Learning Institute. (2 people)
- Bulletin Boards.
- Lost and Found, organizing, etc.
- Senior Navigator- Virginia Navigator.
- Debbie Leidheiser's work with Chesterfield Council on Aging committee.

5. Important comments from the various participants

- Use the local newspapers more to emphasize important facts about our community, like the Age Wave or volunteer opportunities.
- Mental health issues escalate due to isolation.
- Engage younger volunteers to assist with needs in the community. It shouldn't just be seniors leading the charge. Start the youth on a volunteer movement, and help them learn the "spirit" of giving back to the community.
- People have the impression that the priorities of the Board of Supervisors are not the same as their constituents, especially for major issues and mental health problems. (3 people) "We should be able to critique the ideas before the plan is drafted." (1 person)



- Our society doesn't embrace aging. (2 people) Our culture has ceased to feel responsible for caring for aging parents.
- More senior housing is important, so how do we get builders involved with community housing. (3 people)
- Aging parents need to have their own acceptance that they might be required to relocate if their health requires a child to assist, rather than being adamant that they wish to remain in their present location. (2 people)
- Need open-minded planning policy for multi-generational households; too many restrictions such as an additional kitchen for in-law suite and other zoning issues. (2 people)
- Isolation often occurs for seniors because family members have moved away, or they are too busy with their own lives to be available.
- 30% of those retired responded. If they had a choice, they would not have retired. They would have continued to work if the workplace had been more flexible.
- Ideas for engaged community:
 - Free advertising such as on Comcast Network.
 - Community gatherings.
 - Educating churches about opportunities in the community.
 - Do flyers for church bulletins.
 - Advertise in **50+** magazines and community based newspapers.
 - Computer age is not necessarily friendly to many seniors.
- We've been looking for a smaller house in a gated community, but everything we see is too expensive. How do we get those prices down? Doesn't the county charge fees to builders that could affect those prices?
- I am very impressed with this process of preparing for the future, but you need to begin NOW. If you wait until 2030 it is already too late. (1 person)
- Does any county employee(s) oversee how independent living is managed in the county?
- Hope to see more community forums with multiple department heads that allows more time for questions and discussions from citizens.
- Participants would appreciate a time line for this process. Scott shared that our present course is to hold these community forums through the end of October. Then we hope to present our recommendations to the Board of Supervisors by January.
- The question was asked if most of our pilot programs get started with some funding.
- Transportation is a county crisis. (6 people) (1 person: "Why?") The county should reinstate the Petersburg/JTCC/Richmond bus line. (1 person) "I drive but prefer public transportation, which has gone away." (1 person) Can there be agreements with cab companies for senior discounts? (1 person) "Fairfax has a model; age 50+ can get discount coupons for cab rides. (1 person)
- Thank you for my Yellow Dot Information. I've already done it!! Great!
- "Thanks, Scott, for all you do. I was not aware you were a Pastor until the Council on Aging meeting! Awesome. I look forward to working with you."
- Come spend some time with us at the Lifelong Learning Institute.
- We need a Senior Center.
- This form should have a larger print font
- Note: Scott mentioned the county's walkability study and the response from one participant, which was supported by some others was, "We need action, not more studies."
- We should do a project in a district that linked schools, businesses and the library--walking access to all.
- Accessibility is an issue for all county citizens.